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JANUARY 2009 GREAT LAKES WATER LEVEL SUMMARY

LAKE SUPERIOR

Lake Superior remained in its period of seasonal decline during January. Its monthly mean water level of 600.85 feet was 2 inches higher than last January's level, but 8 inches below its long term average (LTA). Lake Superior was also 3 inches lower than its chart datum elevation. Precipitation across the Lake Superior basin was only 39% of average in January, but 96% of average over the last 12 months. The outflow from Lake Superior into the St. Marys River was below average in January. The latest 6-month forecast shows Lake Superior's water level 2 to 3 inches above those of a year ago through April, near last year in May and 1 to 2 inches below last year in June and July. Lake Superior's water level is expected to remain below chart datum through May. The lake will also remain 7 to 8 inches below its LTA over the next 6 months.

LAKE MICHIGAN-HURON

Effects from snow melt and heavy rain during the end of December lingered into January. Lake Michigan-Huron's January monthly mean water level was inch and a half higher than last month. Its level of 577.46 feet was 12 inches higher than January 2008, but 12 inches below its LTA. Lake Michigan-Huron is within an inch of its chart datum elevation of 577.50 feet and is expected to drop below chart datum this month and remain below through April. Precipitation in the Lake Michigan-Huron basin was an inch below average in January, but nearly 3 inches above average over the last 12 months. Lake Michigan-Huron's outflow into the St. Clair River was below average in December. Lake Michigan-Huron is forecasted to remain 2 to 8 inches above its level of a year ago but 12 to 13 inches below its LTA over the next 6 months.

LAKE ST. CLAIR

Lake St. Clair's January mean water level was 573.98 feet, or 5 inches higher than December's monthly mean. Like in the Michigan-Huron basin, lingering effects from snowmelt runoff and heavy rain at the end of December contributed to the rise. January's level was 12 inches higher than last year, and 4 inches above average. The outflow from Lake St. Clair into the Detroit River was near average. The latest 6 month forecast shows Lake St. Clair 1 to 3 inches lower than last year's levels through July. The lake is expected to be near average in February then 3 to 6 inches below its LTA through July.

LAKE ERIE

Lake Erie's water level also rose in January due to runoff and rainfall. Its January mean water level was 571.03 feet; 3 inches higher than last month, 4 inches higher than last year and 2 inches above its LTA. Precipitation in the Lake Erie basin was almost an inch below average in January, but 5 inches above average during the last 12 months. Lake Erie's outflow into the Niagara River was above average in January. The latest forecast shows Lake Erie remaining 3 to 8 inches below last year's levels through July. Lake Erie is projected to be near its LTA through April then 2 to 3 inches below average in May, June and July.

LAKE ONTARIO

Lake Ontario's water level rose significantly during January. Its mean water level of 245.28 feet was 8 inches higher than last month's level, 8 inches above last year's level and 8 inches above its LTA. Precipitation in the basin was an inch below average in December and 2.6 inches above average during the last 12 months. The lake's outflow into the St. Lawrence River was near average in January. Lake Ontario is expected to be 1 inch above last year's levels in February, then fall to 5 to 13 inches below last year's level through July. It is forecasted to remain 3 to 7 inches above its LTA in February and March and then be 1 to 2 inches below LTA through July.